

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9413

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMBAD

AMEMBASSY NE DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0272

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, BG

SUBJ: INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 693

1. DURING MY CALL ON INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER SAMAR SEN JANUARY 15 TO SEE HOW HE IS RECOVERING FROM WOUND SUFFERED IN ASSAULT ON HIM NOVEMBER 26, HIS COMMENTS ON CURRENT STATE OF INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS WERE MUCH IN SAME VEIN AS THOSE REPORTED IN NEW DELHI'S REFTEL. HE BLAMES BANGLADESH OFFICIALS FOR ARTIFICALLY STIMULATING TENSIONS, DENIES THAT INDIA HAS ACTED IN ANY WAY TO THREATEN BANGLADESH, BUT BELIEVES THAT AT SPHERE NOW IS A GOOD DEAL BETTER THAN IT HAD BEEN EARLIER.

2. SEN SAID THAT THE GRADUAL EASING OF TENSION WAS THE CUMULATIVE RESULT OF SUCCESSFUL TALKS IN CALCUTTA BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RESPECTIVE BORDER FORCES, OF TALKS IN NEW DELHI HELD BY THE BDG SPECIAL DELEGATION SENT THERE AFTER HE HAD BEEN SHOT, AND OF THE RECENT TRADE TALKS. STILL ANOTHER BILATERAL MEETING HAD BEEN PROPOSED ON SMUGGLING AND RELATED PROBLEMS BUT THE BANGALEES WERE
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NOT YET ORGANIZED FOR IT. HE WAS ESPECIALLY PLEASED THAT

THERE HAD BEEN SOME MODERATION OF THE CRITICISM HEARD HERE ABOUT INDIA. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, THERE WERE STILL SOME BAD SPOTS IN THE PICTURE--FOR EXPAMPLE, THE RECENT LOOTING OF AN IMPORTANT HINDU TEMPLE AND DISQUIETING IF SOMEWHAT SHAKY REPORTS THAT MUJIBITES, ESPECIALLY IF THERE WERE HINDU, WERE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN THE GOVERNMENT. WHETHER THE REPORTS WERE TRUE OR NOT WAS NOT AS IMPORTANT, HE SAID, AS THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ACCEPTED AS TRUE. THEY WERE TRYING TO KEEP SUCH THINGS QUIET IN INDIA BUT COULD NOT ALWAYS SUCCEED.

3. HE SCOFFED AT REPORTS THAT INDIA HAD ACTED IN ANY WAY THAT THREATENED BDG, ASSERTING THAT INDIA HAD NEVER MOVED

ANY SECURITY FORCES TOWARD THE BANGLADESH BORDER AND THAT IT HAD NOT TRIED TO STIR UP TROUBLE INSIDE BANGLADESH. HE SAID THEY HAD STOPPED SOME OF THE BDG'S COMPLAINTS WHEN THEY INSISTED THAT THE TWO SIDES GO TOGETHER DIRECTLY TO THE ALLEGED TROUBLE SPOTS ALONG THE BORDER TO SEE EXACTLY WHAT WAS GOING ON. HE SAID HE SUSPECTED THERE HAD BEEN A TENDENCY ON PART OF LOCAL BANGLADESH OFFICIALS, UNABLE TO IMPOSE EFFECTIVE POLICE CONTROLS IN THEIR AREAS, TO TAKE THE EASY OUT OF BLAMING THEIR TROUBLES ON THE INDIANS.

4. ALTHOUGH IN STRIKINGLY CHEERFUL MOOD, SEN SAID HE WAS ON HIS FOURTH CAST AND IT WOULD BE ABOUT THREE WEEKS BEFORE TI WOULD BE FINALLY REMOVED. CONSEQUENTLY, HE IS NOT YET RESUMING HIS NORMAL ACTIVITIES HERE. HE SAID HE STILL DOES NOT HAVE A SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION OF THE REASONS FOR THE EPISODE IN WHICH HE WAS SHOT. HE SAID HE DOES NOT ACCEPT THE KIDNAPPING THEORY SINCE ANY SENSIBLE KIDNAPPER WOULD NEVER HAVE PLANNED THE EVENT IN THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION COMPOUND. THE ONLY THING HE SURE ABOUT, HE SAID, IS THAT IT WAS NOT A SIMPLE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AS HIS ATTACKERS HAD THIS OPPORTUNITY AND DID NOT KILL HIM.
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